

SAC and FOX NEWS

Coming in July
49th Annual POWWOW



Sac and Fox News
920883 S. Hwy 99
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Chief's Address To The Nation

Sac & Fox Members,

I am pleased to report that our Sac and Fox Nation government is progressing forward in many areas since the first of the year 2012! I have listed some specific areas later in my article under Short Takes.

Local News

I had the privilege to present testimony before the Special Rapporteur Jim Anaya on his Official Visit to the United States of America as a part of consultation with Indigenous Leaders. The University of Tulsa College of Law hosted this event on May 3, 2012.



Chief George Thurman
TESTIMONY OF
GEORGE L. THURMAN
PRINCIPAL CHIEF
SAC AND FOX NATION

Special Rapporteur, my name is George L. Thurman, and I am

the Principal Chief of the Sac and Fox Nation. I thank you for the opportunity to present the Sac and Fox Nation's testimony. We appreciate your dedication to righting the wrongs our people suffered in the past and suffer in the present.

Federal Corporate Charter

Since federal recognition as an organized Tribe, the Sac and Fox people have fought to maintain the wellbeing of our people. The Sac and Fox have persevered to maintain our sovereignty through history and into the era of Self-Governance despite broken treaties and inadequacy of federal funding.

Historically the people of the Sac and Fox Nation stood alongside many nations to seek and pave paths to new frontiers for all Tribes in the United States. This is evident in our Supreme Court victory on May 17, 1993 over the State of Oklahoma with regard to registering vehicles and issuing license plates for Tribal members.

Then, once again, the Sac and Fox Nation forged new territory in the seeking of Corporate Federal Charters in accordance with the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936. In 1987 the Sac and Fox Nation moved this exercise of Self-Governance forward with the signing of a Federal Corporate Charter by, then Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Ross Swimmer. The key purposes of our Charter are to advance the standard of living of the Tribe through the development of Tribal resources, the acquisition of new Tribal land, the preservation of existing land holdings, the better utilization of lands, the development of a credit program for the Tribe, and the furtherance of economic industrial development within the Tribal jurisdiction.

In October of 2007, after decades of attempting to place tracts of land into trust through the process administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Sac and Fox Nation placed twenty-four tracts of land into trust in accordance with our Federal Corporate Charter. Where trust applications had been disapproved in the past by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for reasons such as not having an easement despite the fact the Sac and Fox Nation owns the adjacent property, the Sac and Fox Nation placed these twenty-four tracts into trust in accordance with the Charter and Laws of the Sac and Fox Nation. On November 6, 2007, the Sac and Fox Nation issued notice of these actions to the Secretary of Interior, the Southern Plains Regional Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Oklahoma State agencies, and each respective County agency. The Sac and Fox Nation's peak of accomplishment was hit hard by opposition in a letter from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Southern Plains Region dated March 7, 2008 stating "it is a well-established legal precedent, that absent the Secretary's approval of such conveyance, trust status is not imposed."

The Sac and Fox Nation holds firm that Secretarial approval was granted in the signing of the Federal Corporate Charter. We stand strong behind the foresight of the leaders of the Sac and Fox Nation that held close the vision of improving the quality of life for our people through the economic development provisions of the 1987 Federal Corporate Charter.

The insight of the leaders of the Sac and Fox Nation subsequent to those essential to the 1987 Federal Corporate Charter ignited the initiative to further extend the resources of the Sac and Fox Nation to improve the well being of its people by the passing of a Tribal resolution on May 13, 2008 petitioning the Secretary of Interior to approve a second Federal Corporate Charter. Consultation with then Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Carl Artman, at the 64th annual NCAI Convention and Trade Show held in Denver in November 2007 and in an audience granted during a trip to Muskogee, Oklahoma in the Spring of 2008, led to the signing of a second Federal Corporate Charter on May 22, 2008. The significant intentions of the second Federal Corporate Charter were to advance the standard of living of the Nation, its citizens, other Indians, and other persons associated with the Nation, through the acquisition of new Indian land, the preservation and expansion of Indian land holdings, the development of natural resources, the better utilization of land, the development of credit programs for the acquisition, development, and improvement of lands and the reduction of fractionated heir ships. In addition the Nation could further explore economic and industrial development on Indian lands; promote economic self-sufficiency and political self-determination for Indian Tribes and members of Indian Tribes; encourage inter-Tribal, regional, and international trade and business development in order to assist in increasing productivity, improving the standard of living of citizens of Indian Tribes, and improving the economic self-sufficiency of the governing bodies of Indian Tribes.

Although the Sac and Fox Nation has two Federal Corporate Charters approved and signed by two former Assistant Secretaries of Indian Affairs, opposition has arisen again. The 2008 Federal Corporate Charter signed by

former Assistant Secretary Carl Artman waits to be scrutinized by the Solicitor's office of the Department of the Interior in advisement to the National Indian Gaming Commission. A letter received from the National Indian Gaming Commission dated February 17, 2012, states that "the Office of General Counsel will coordinate with the Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor on whether the Indian lands definition is permissible under IGRA and whether such lands are eligible for gaming under IGRA." While Interior review was neither solicited nor warranted, the historical resistance of the Office of the Secretary of Interior is peaking over the shoulders of the National Indian Gaming Commission. The outgoing Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Larry Echohawk,

has diverted questions regarding Interior's position with regard to our Federal Corporate Charters to standard bureaucratic statements such as "I cannot answer at this time as it is under review by the Office of Solicitor." Attempts to seek an audience with Assistant Secretary Echohawk were weighed down with a discouraging screening process while the fate of the economy of the Sac and Fox Nation got lost in red tape. Former Assistant Secretary Echohawk's written testimony to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on the President's 2013 Budget Request for Indian Programs in the Department of the Interior states the Department of Interior is seeking an increase for \$43.8 million in funding for the Strengthening Tribal Nations initiative yet the

(Continued on Page 3)

Upcoming Events

June 13, 2012

Elders Advisory
Committee Meeting
Shawnee
Potluck & White
Elephant Bingo
10am - ?

June 12, 5 pm

Sac & Fox Nation
Veterans' Meeting
Elders Bldg Stroud

Saturday, June 9

Shareholders Mtg.
Community Center
Stroud

June 16

Powwow camp
clean-up

July 12

SFN Health Fair
10am - 2pm
Community Bldg

July 13

Sauk Language Dept.
Open House
11am - 1pm

**49th Annual
POWWOW**

July 12 - 15 2012



Tribal leaders gathered recently for the final inspection of the new swimming pool parking lot project. The project, using BIA Indian Reservation Road funds, was completed under budget and ahead of schedule. Pictured left to right are: Stella Nullake, Committee Person; Don Russell, Russell Engineering; Carla Reed, Treasurer; David Russell, Russell Engineering; George Thurman, Principal Chief; Michael Summers, C-3 Construction; Jacklyn Williams, Secretary; and Vickie Benham, Property & Procurement Director.

Progress Continues At The Sac and Fox Nation Tribal Complex

With the weather cooperating, along with some hard work, the new Sac and Fox Nation Cultural center is moving along. The new complex is scheduled, weather permitting, to be completed sometime in September.

If you have been by the Tribal Complex lately you've probably noticed all the progress taking place.

The new swimming pool parking lot is now complete and ready to accommodate parking for all the summer fun activities.

Maintenance crews have been especially busy getting ready

for the 49th Annual Powwow coming up in July.

Acting Maintenance Director, J. Paul Wilson, said that a new Handicap/Elders covered stand has been completed at the Powwow arena, which should accommodate 15 - 20 people.

The bleachers will also be setting on new concrete pads that were recently installed for safety reasons.

The new pool is up and running and by the time this newspaper comes out I'm sure there will be a thousand splashes from a lot of happy kids, as well as adults.



New Cultural Center: With good weather, construction continues at a good pace and should be completed in September.
(Sac and Fox News photo)